

CURRICULUM COUNCIL

August 2, 2012
Minutes



☐ Welcome New Members

- Contribution | Collaboration | Communication
- Relationships | Feedback | Student Engagement
 - Daphne briefly talked about John Hattie's research, which includes many studies about the importance of building relationships with students, providing students with explicit feedback, and student engagement. These items are added to our list as on-going reminders of their importance.
 - Daphne also reiterated that this council is a collaborative committee charged with providing leadership and communication throughout the remainder of the district. Teachers, outside of this group, should receive regular updates on the work of our leadership group. Communication should be on-going. Our work should be transparent.

☐ Our Focus

- Continued support of writing workshop K – 7 (2013: K-8)
- Continued support of SAS & Curriculum Development – *Getting it online...*
- Integration of literacy strategies across content areas – *More R.A. strategies, more writing...*
- * Keystone Exams - *Algebra I, Literature, Biology*

☐ Urgency – Something to think about over lunch...

- Our urgency is specific to the work we must do as a district this year and into the future to prepare students for the Keystone exams. These exams are difficult. We must begin immediately to make changes to our curriculum, our instruction, and our assessment that will be specific and on-going.
- Daphne mentioned the recent negative press regarding our “failing” school district. It was noted that it seems no matter what we do at the elementary and middle school levels, our district is ranked and judged by what happens at the high school level. This means we all must work together to make improvements and success happen.
- Our students are no different than students in other districts. We need to stop making excuses for this and start moving in a more positive direction.
- Through this transition year and into the future, we know that we have to have a laser focus on all students successfully passing the Keystone exams in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. This is **everyone's** goal.
- What contribution and commitment will each person make? How will we stop talking about it and start doing it?
- Set goals and priorities now!

☐ Teamwork – An activity just for fun

☐ Keystone Exams

- We split into three groups to closely exam blueprints for the Keystone exams. Specifically, we looked for:
 - What types of questions are asked in the samples provided? What does that mean for the types of questions we ask in our exams?
 - Anchor descriptors and eligible content – Where is the content being taught? What should we do about that?

- How is vocabulary handled? What does that mean for us?
 - What are key words used in the questions? What should we do about that?
 - We concluded with a commitment to revise our assessments over the course of this school year. This includes the elimination of fill-in-the-blank, one-word answer, and/or true|false questions and a move towards short answer, constructed responses that are more Keystone exam-like.
 - We also recognized that value of specific instruction in vocabulary and the addition of word walls in classrooms as daily reminders of key words students should know.
 - We need to have focus and right now we are focused on three goals: Algebra I, Biology, and Literature
 - We need to be on the same page with our achievement goal and we will make changes to ensure that happens.
 - We also recognize that some members of our teams are reluctant to change no matter what. We need to work on this by setting expectations and providing the necessary follow through. We all need to get on board! We should want to get on board. We should not have to “comply” just because we are told to do so, but rather because we see the need and the importance of doing so for our students.
 - No content outside of the Keystone exam eligible content will be taught no matter what is in your textbook.
- ☐ Our Commitment to Literacy – What will we do more of next year?
- **TO-DO:** Discuss this with your teams on Tuesday.
 - Recently, the PA CCSS for Reading and Writing in Social Studies, History, Science & Technical subjects. I will attach them to my email for your convenience.
- ☐ Curriculum Template No discussion just yet, but this is coming so get ready. Make sure your groups know they too will have to get ready.
- ☐ Organization of Meetings
- There was discussion about organizing meetings to include the possibility of breaking the group into focus areas. For now, we will continue with a monthly whole group meeting. Please see the attached revised schedule.
- ☐ Ideas for half-hour monthly grade-level/departments meetings – Please be thinking about ideas and be prepared to discuss at our next meeting.
- **TO-DO:** Some council members have emailed me with ideas. You should discuss with your team on Tuesday and let me know what is decided.
- ☐ Homework Discussion – Policy, etc... (No discussion)
- ☐ Feedback Discussion – How much is enough? What does it look like in the classroom? **No** discussion, however, please read the Education Update article that was distributed.
- ☐ iPads & Quick Office –
- New members will be receiving iPads. If you are interested in having Quick Office installed on your iPad, let Daphne know. (My apologies, but I neglected to tell you that there is a \$10 charge for the app, which is a 50% reduced rate from the regular iTunes cost. We opted for this approach in order to more personalize your device rather than having to logon using two different accounts. Also, you will actually own the app and you can take it with you should you ever leave the district.
- ☐ Websites – Removal of all personal information – **TO-DO:** Do this now and communicate the importance back to the teachers in your buildings.

☐ Other items:

➤ Read chapters 1 – 3 of your *Pathways to the Common Core* book

☐ Next meeting – September 19, 2012 3:00 PM – MWHHS Room 105 (Yes, this is a change from the original September 17th date.)

“We used to think that one’s IQ was relatively fixed. From the time it could be measured, there was little we could do to raise it, no matter how much stimulation or education we provided. Now we know that one’s IQ is variable and that through mental and emotional nourishment and education, there can be significant improvements. We also know that even with an increase in a student’s IQ, there will be little change in his or her ability to succeed and be happy if the self-concept remains negative. Self-esteem, it seems, is as important to the educational process and quality of life as intelligence. In other words, a student’s ‘I am’s’ are as important as their IQ’s”

What kind of I am’s do you manifest in your classroom?

I am a slow learner, or I catch on quickly.

“Teachers are like mirrors, constantly reflecting back to students what we think of them.”

--Chick Moorman & Nancy Weber *Teacher Talk* (pgs 54-57)